

Vienna Document visit praised

By **CHRISTINE JUNE**

U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern

"Going above and beyond" was expressed in about 30 languages about the Vienna Document 1999 Military Installation Visit held Aug. 1 and 2 in Kaiserslautern.

"They (U.S. Army Europe) went further than the provisions of the Vienna Document," said Lt. Col. Prasenjit Chaudhuri, head of the Switzerland Verification Unit for the Vienna Document, and who was chosen as the delegates' spokesperson. "The echo I had from the delegates is that they are happy."

Representing 32 countries, 48 delegates witnessed deployment and redeployment processes conducted by the 21st Theater Support Command units at Kaiserslautern Army Depot and Rhine Ordnance Barracks during the USAREUR-hosted visit.

"The United States armed forces were not obliged to show these units under the Vienna Document," said Chaudhuri. "The fact they are showing these units contributes to the spirit of the Vienna Document."

The spirit of this politically-binding agreement is to promote trust and encourage openness between 56 member nations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, said Marlys Dewor, USAREUR treaty and compliance branch chief.

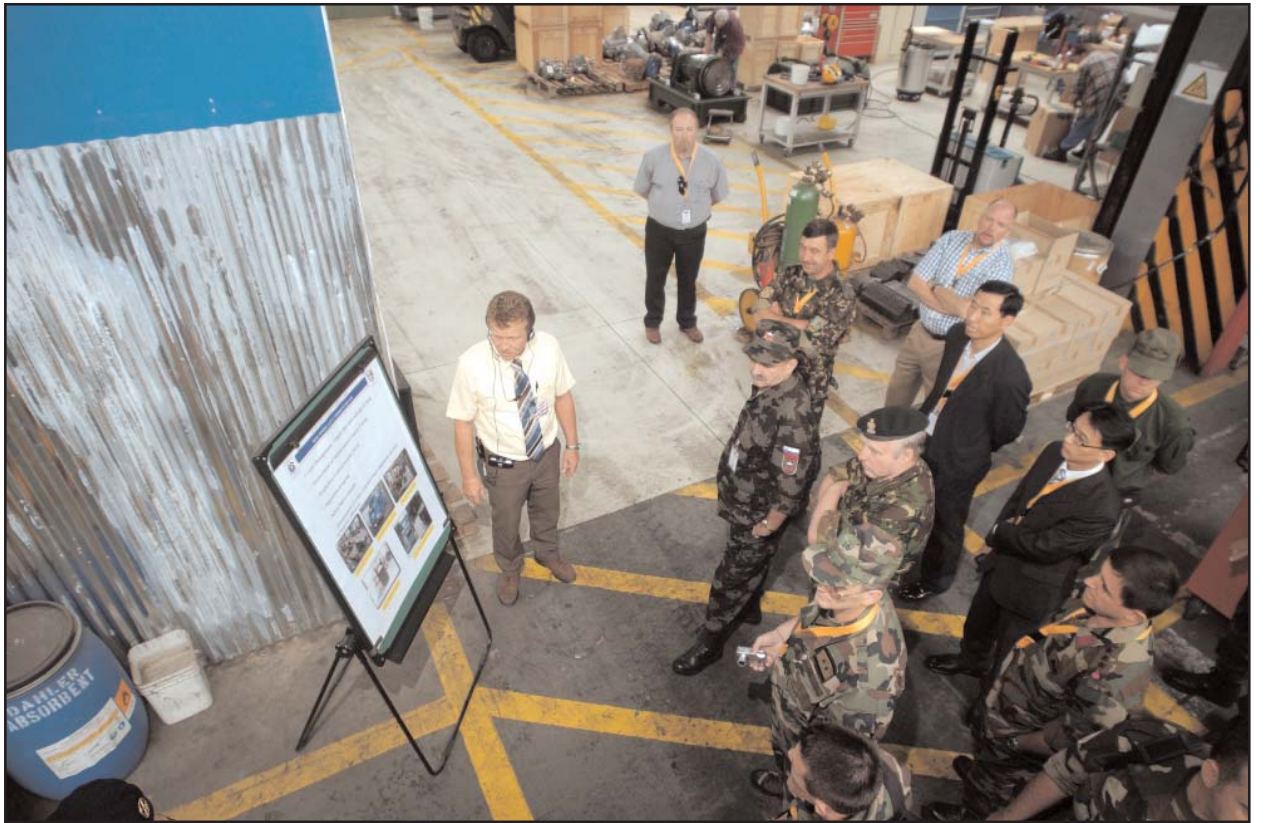
"It's to build working relationships and understanding among the member nations," she said. "It's geared to establishing contacts within the members' military forces through inspections and military facility visits like this one."

Each member nation that has a military force is required by the document to host a visit to one of its military facilities in Europe every five years. It was the United States' turn, and USAREUR fulfilled this requirement by calling on the U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern and 21st TSC. "We actually showed two military facilities, which is beyond what the Vienna Document calls for," said Dewor.

The delegates visited 21st TSC General Support Center-Europe units at KAD and saw the 29th Support Group in action on ROB.

"These two days we saw something delegates normally do not get to see, something different instead of combat or armored stuff," said Cmdr. Bernd A. Thöner, the chief German escort from the Bundeswehr Verification Center Division. As the host nation, Germany provided transportation and logistical support for the delegates when they were not on American soil.

Member nations usually hold these document visits at training sites because "it's exciting to see tanks shooting," said Dewor. That also holds true for the United States as the two previous USAREUR-hosted visits in 1995 and 2000 were at the training facility in Grafenwöhr.



Photos by CHRISTINE JUNE

Markus Cappel, Maintenance Activity Kaiserslautern director, explains his unit's mission and capabilities to Vienna Document delegates.

"We wanted to make it different, interesting and exciting so we decided to have it here (Kaiserslautern) and focus on the deployment and redeployment processes and all the different activities that go into it," said Dewor.

All these different activities showcased for the delegates included GSC-E supply, shipping, hazardous material and maintenance facilities. The delegates fired 12-gauge shotguns and M203 grenade launchers loaded with non-lethal rounds. They witnessed how a truck is scrutinized by the garrison's Large Vehicle Inspection System, and Soldiers working at the 5th Quartermaster Rigger Facility and 1st Cargo Transfer Company.



Col. Hiroshi Yasui, military attache to the Japanese Embassy in Berlin, listens to the command briefings.

"It gave my Soldiers the opportunity to show off what they actually do with our large material handling equipment," said Staff Sgt. Darron Pittman, 1st CTC 1st platoon section chief. "They don't get looked at a lot because we are combat service support and most of the attention goes to the combat arms units."

Pittman said he read up on the Vienna Document so he could prepare for this visit. This was a gesture that did not go unnoticed.

"I always try to get the feeling from the Soldiers - how do they see this visit; is it a bother to them; and have they been briefed. I was very happy to see that most Soldiers knew exactly what the purpose of this visit was," said Chaudhuri. "They were very keen to show their best and proud to be a part of this visit."



Lt. Col. Harald Biermann, from the Bundeswehr Verification Center, fires an M-4 Carbine with 203 Grenade launcher during a weapons demonstration.